

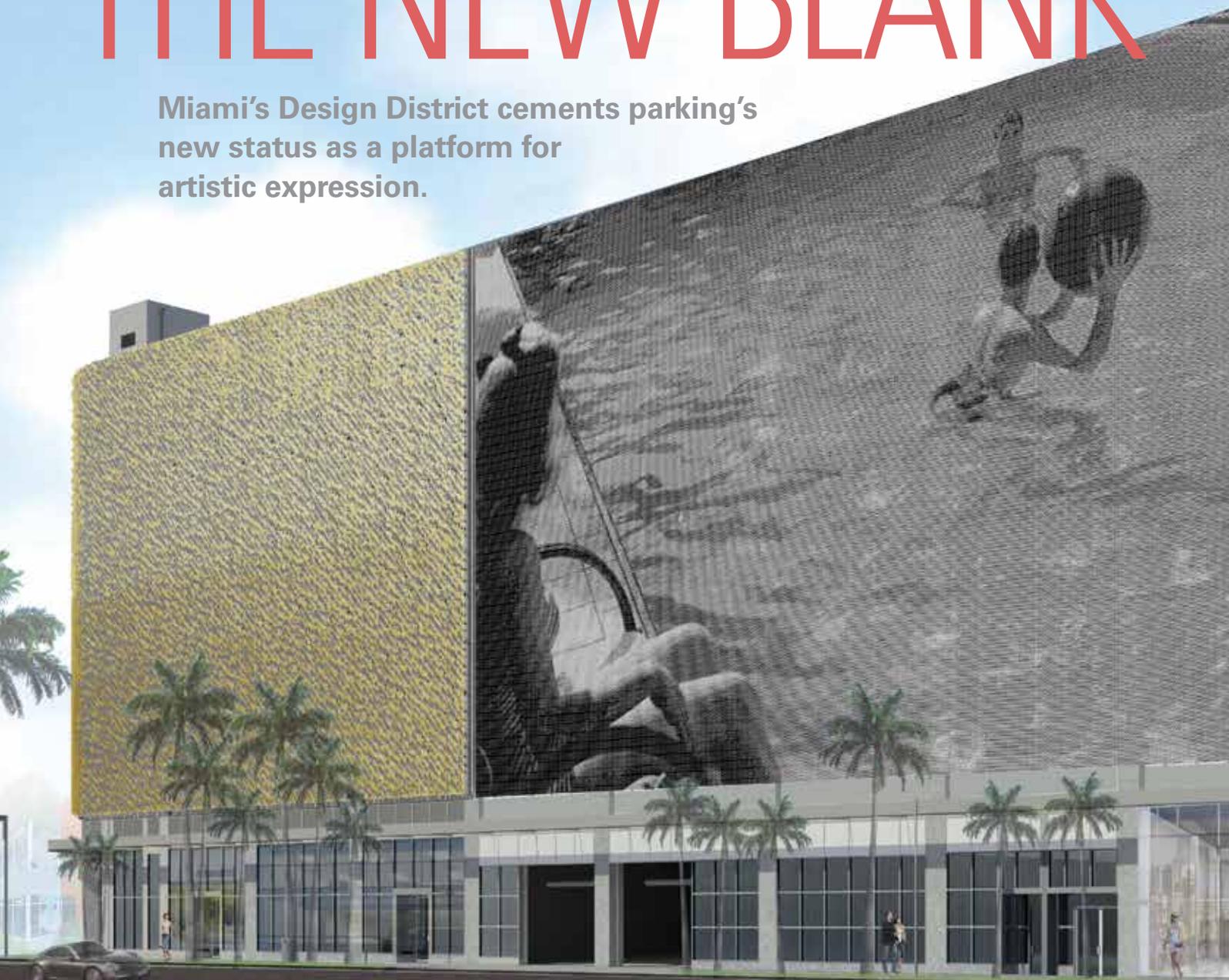


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# THE NEW BLANK

Miami's Design District cements parking's new status as a platform for artistic expression.



FOR THE PAST DECADE, SOUTH FLORIDA has been on the cutting edge of parking facility design. Miami Beach projects such as the internationally renowned 1111 Lincoln Road parking structure (see the October 2011 issue of *The Parking Professional*) and the planned Collins Park Place have broken the rules of parking garage design and transformed the conventional ideas and perceptions of structured parking.

# CANVAS



RENDERINGS COURTESY OF IWAMOTO SCOTT, LEONG LEONG, AND TIM HAAHS



The City View Garage

Palm Court is the first phase of the Design District transformation and will set the design and artistic groundwork upon which all future phases will be modeled.



than simply places to temporarily store their vehicles.

While the integration of modern, high-end architecture has become a more common sight in recent years, developers in Miami are implementing another

One of the most important factors leading this revolution is the commitment of signature architects who have taken their experience of designing traditionally remarkable buildings, such as skyscrapers and cultural centers, and transferred their architectural expertise and unique design concepts onto parking structures. Firms such as 1111 Lincoln Road designer Herzog & De Meuron and Collins Park Place designer Zaha Hadid have dramatically altered the parking design landscape and brought international recognition to these revolutionary projects.

As parking professionals, we have, of course, always understood the excitement a parking garage can inspire. But this new partnership with world-class architects has helped to bring the intrigue of parking more mainstream. With that has also come a newfound appreciation for parking by the public, who see these facilities with their vibrant façades, community spaces, and contribution to streetscape vibrancy as destinations to explore rather

design concept that is sure to generate just as much excitement. Developers of Miami's Design District are taking the idea of architectural design to an entirely new level.

For years, the Design District was a place where local artists, interior decorators, and furniture designers set up shops to showcase and sell their crafts. Located north of Midtown Miami, the district features more than 130 art galleries, showrooms, antique dealers, restaurants, and more. Until recently, the architectural make-up of the district was primarily old low-rise warehouses and gallery spaces, but developer DACRA is in the process of transforming the district into an international destination for shopping, culture, and art. The development has succeeded in attracting luxury retailers that include Dior, Louis Vuitton, Marc Jacobs, and many more, bringing the district into direct competition with long-established Miami shopping destinations, such as Lincoln Road and Bal Harbour Shops.



## Bringing Art to Life

In a recent *South Florida Business Journal* article, DACRA CEO Craig Robins stated, “My goal is the Design District would be a place, if you are coming to Miami, you absolutely have to see it—just to see the public art, the design, the culture that is here.” This quote sums up the distinctive vision that DACRA and similar developers have for this community and the goals of creating a destination for travelers from throughout the U.S., South America, Asia, and the rest of the world. Robins himself is an international contemporary art and design collector, so it is no wonder he has chosen to weave art throughout his most significant and spectacular project.

The integration of art into the Design District neighborhood has come in many forms. There is the spectacular “Fly’s Eye Dome” in the center of the district, modeled after a similar structure developed by the Buckminster Fuller Institute in New York. The dome is an evolved version of the Buckminster original, with a Miami flair Robins commissioned himself.

Another example of art in the district is the design of the Palm Court retail spaces. Palm Court is the first phase of the Design District transformation and will set the design and artistic groundwork upon which all future phases will be modeled. The Palm Court façades feature colorful glass fins, inspired by the flowing movement of waterfalls and the rain showers typical in Miami’s climate. The roof-to-ground panels are highlighted by vibrant lighting at night and create a



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superior pedestrian experience, drawing attention to the large courtyard at the center of Palm Court. Even the landscaping throughout the development connects visitors to artistic expression, including lining the streets and rooftops with collectible trees.

Future plans for the district include a 100-room boutique hotel, a 70-unit condo building, and a museum. Each of these projects will incorporate similar design ideas and concepts, making the district a true model for the juxtaposition between architecture, art, and public space. The project will also include a number of sustainable design elements, with plans to achieve LEED Gold Certification.



### Bringing Art to Parking

The Design District will continue to reshape a community and become a rare international model of architecture and art for international travelers. However, the special vision DACRA created with this project doesn't stop at the shopping areas and public spaces. Rather, the developer has extended this vision into the design of its parking facilities. When completed, parking in the Design District will become as much of a destination as the rest of the development.

Current plans include the development of two new parking facilities: the City View parking structure and the Museum parking structure. One of the most unique characteristics of the garage designs is the use of numerous façade architects on each project. This not only helped break up the garages into multiple distinctive

looks but allowed for numerous artistic schemes to be prevalent throughout.

Two internationally renowned architectural firms worked on the nearly completed City View parking garage façade designs—Leong Leong Architects and Iwamoto Scott—and it is set to open this spring. The garage includes approximately 22,660 square feet of retail and 14,790 square feet of office space.

To complement the district's dedication to the creative experience, it provides an attractive connection between parking and the rest of the development with its vibrant façades, dramatic lighting, and ground-floor retail spaces to engage the pedestrian. The Leong Leong façade consists of a titanium-plated stainless steel shimmering wrapper, with thousands of sections cut and folded out to provide an almost 3-D visualization. The Iwamoto

The currently in-design Museum Garage will feature a total of five façade designs, each with its own individual vision and look.



Scott façade features a digitally fabricated metal screen wrapping around to the side of the garage with a blue and silver gradient color pattern that complements that of the surrounding Palm Court buildings. The middle portion of the façade will feature a public art piece by John Baldessari. This piece showcases a highly technical artistic application that transforms the pixel from a simple ink dot into a cut-out in the steel panel, providing a variation in tone and creating an image that is ambiguous up close but becomes gradually more visible at a distance.

Highly visible from Miami's I-195 interstate, the City View garage will offer visitors their first experience to the Design District. It will serve as an intriguing visual to invite passersby to come check out the area. Further, the garage event provides a dynamic view from the air,

featuring a rooftop mural that depicts a radar-like image of a live hurricane.

While the City View garage will undoubtedly offer visitors an exciting first impression to the Design District experience, the second planned parking facility intends to take the idea of integrating art into garage design to a brand-new place.

The currently in-design Museum Garage will feature a total of five façade designs, each with its own individual vision and look. The façades start at the corner view from North Miami Avenue and Northeast First Street, with the "Ant Farm." Modeled after the concept of the children's toy, this is by far the most interactive section of the garage, providing a public space where people can gather and explore the structure inside and out.

Additional façade designs will include a series of abstract concepts. The combination of four architects plus a theater/stage designer results in a distinctive display of very individual artistic visions. Design elements include hanging cars, Japanese anime themes with cartoonish figures and "Caryatid" columns, landscaping planters, and a mural that runs along the entire back side of the structure.

### That's a Wrap

Using the garage façade as a canvas provided designers with an opportunity to bring the vision of artistic expression out of the more traditional public spaces within the Design District to become the first thing visitors will see and interact with upon arriving. Carrying the art out to the parking areas allows an often-overlooked experience within a development to instead make a significant contribution and further connect the development to the surrounding community. All four walls of the garage incorporate their own unique elements, with each contributing some form of artistic expression to the overall development.

The Design District is not just a shopping center. It is an exhilarating addition to an already vibrant and trend-setting city. The integration of art and architecture, combined with the interest and commitment of international high-end retailers, and the opportunities for residential living is a special undertaking of a live/work/play experience not often successfully accomplished.

Extending such a concept onto the development's parking facilities will provide visitors with a consistent interactive experience from the time they drive up to the parking garages, throughout their visit, and to the time they arrive back at their vehicle to leave. It is one of few destinations of its kind that combine the ideas of art, architecture, community, and culture together into one place and will ensure that the development will be an international destination for years to come. 



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